10

THE MELANCHOLY of HARUHI SUZUMIYA

ART BY GAKU TSUGANO

STORY BY NAGARU TANIGAWA

CHARACTERS BY: NOIZI ITO

HYUUUU (WHOOSH)
Kyon, listen to me carefully.
WHAT'S UP?
THAT'S A LITTLE EX-TREME.
You're my only lifeline.
I can't tell anybody else about this.
KOOOOON (DONGGG)
I'm in love.

ORIGINAL STORY **NAGARU TANIGAWA**

MANGA **GAKU TSUGANO**

CHARACTER DESIGN:
NOIZI ITO

THE MELANCHOLY of HARUHI SUZUMIYA

10

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DON (THUD)

I'm in love.

HOW... DID THIS HAPPEN?

?

I have a real dilemma here.

I'm serious.

...LET'S SORT THIS...

...OR ELSE I'M GOING TO SNAP.

DARA

DARA (SWEAT)

U-UH...

DARA

IT ALL BEGAN WITH AN ANNOYING PHONE CALL.

IT WAS WINTER VACATION, AND THE WORLD WAS COUNTING DOWN THE DAYS LEFT IN THE YEAR.

KYON-KUN, PHONE CALL.

HELLO?

Oh, Kyon?

It's me. Been a while, huh?

AND NOW... HE'S IN LOVE?

I RECALL THERE BEING SOMEBODY BY THAT NAME. WE WERE IN THE SAME CLASS DURING MY THIRD YEAR OF MIDDLE SCHOOL...

...NAKA-GAWA?

I flipped through the middle school directory to find your number.

NYAA (MEOW)

Don't you get it, Kyon?

All for love.

UH...

I'M STILL TREMBLING AS WE SPEAK.

IT TOOK A FEW TRIES BEFORE I COULD BRING MYSELF TO ACTUALLY CALL YOU.

UH, NAKAGAWA ...

The power of love guided me to make this call.

It's love.

REALLY, I'M SORRY ABOUT THIS.

UNFORTU-NATELY, I DON'T KNOW HOW TO RESPOND.

...BUT YOUR LOVE IS TOO MUCH FOR ME TO BEAR.

SORRY...

DON (GLOOM)

I'm not done talking.

Wait, Kyon.

HAVE FUN AT YOUR ALL-BOYS' SCHOOL...

Only that she's a student at North High...

I ACTUALLY DON'T KNOW HER NAME.

I can see her now when I close my eyes.

She was walking with you.

It was back during spring, in May.

BUT WAIT...

OH, THAT'S WHAT THIS WAS ABOUT?

AH...

She looked so lovely...

...SO I GUESS HE'S GOT IT BAD.

WELL, THAT'S NICE...

I COULD SEE THIS HALO OF LIGHT BEHIND HER.

THERE CAN BE LOVE AT FIRST SIGHT, KYON!

NAKAGAWA AND I WERE NEVER THAT CLOSE...

You raise a painful point.

Oh, Kyon!

SO THIS HAPPENED BACK IN MAY?

SIX MONTHS HAVE PASSED...

I KEPT WONDERING HOW I MIGHT PRESENT MYSELF AS A SUITABLE MATCH.

I DIDN'T KNOW WHAT TO DO.

GU

GU

GU (CLENCH)

THE PAST SIX MONTHS WERE TORTURE FOR ME.

DESCRIBE THE GIRL.

HAVE TO DO SOMETHING...

HE'S LOST IT...

UH...

That was all I could think about...

RIGHT?

RIGHT?

LIB

POPON

She had short hair.

AH.

LIBRARY

PON (POOF)

I saw her by the library.

MM.

And she was surrounded by this glowing aura.

NOT TOO SURE ABOUT THAT ONE.

PAAAA (SHIIINE)

LIB

POPON

Looked stupendous in the North High sailor uniform.

UH-HUH.

YOU'VE GOT A KEEN EYE.

HOWEVER, I HAVE THE ANSWER.

NAGATO, HUH...?

AND WE WERE SUPPOSED TO CLEAN OUT THE CLUBROOM TODAY.

IT WAS WINTER VACATION, YET THE SOS BRIGADE STILL HELD ROUTINE MEETINGS.

THE NEXT AFTER-NOON...

...I WAS TRUDGING UP THE HILL TO NORTH HIGH IN SILENCE.

GASA (RUSTLE)

"!!"

MAN... WHAT A DRAG.

MY HEAD BEGAN TO HURT AS I CONSIDERED HOW I WAS GOING TO DUMP ALL OF THE JUNK HARUHI HAD BROUGHT IN.

ON TOP OF THAT ...

I want you to tell Nagato-san how I feel.

有希さま、
てもおられず、このような
で思い起こ
すれ下さい。
実はあなたに一目会った
ら、わたくしの日常は一変いたし
ま　自分でも信じられない
が　まさかこれ
に

HOW WERE YOU ABLE TO INSTANTLY TELL THAT SHE WAS SUCH A NOBLE PERSON?

...UH.

I could see this divine wisdom in her.

There's nothing delusional about it... I just know it.

You must be on friendly terms, right?

You were the one walking next to her.

HMM...

PLEASE, YOU'RE THE ONLY PERSON I CAN TURN TO.

YOU CAN'T BLAME ME FOR KNOWING AFTER ONE LOOK!

...WHEN NAGATO AND I WENT TO THE LIBRARY DURING THE FIRST SOS BRIGADE PATROL...

I SEE. SO IT MUST HAVE BEEN THEN...

HE'D SEEN US IN THE LIBRARY IN MAY WHEN NAGATO WAS IN HER UNIFORM?

WELL, I GUESS.

KURU

KURU (TWIRL)

KURU

KURU

BY THE WAY, NAKAGAWA ...

FEELS LIKE IT HAPPENED AGES AGO.

Not for a second.

...DID IT EVER CROSS YOUR MIND THAT WE MIGHT BE IN A RELATIONSHIP?

WHEN YOU SAW ME WALKING WITH NAGATO...

UH... WELL.

...BUT THAT ODDBALL YOU WERE WITH IN OUR THIRD YEAR OF MIDDLE SCHOOL?

ARE YOU STILL WITH... I FORGET HER NAME...

I remember you preferring weird girls.

KYON'S INTO WEIRD CHICKS!

COME TO THINK OF IT, KUNIKIDA HAD SAID SOMETHING ALONG THE SAME LINES.

HE WAS CLEARLY MISTAKEN.

UH, THAT WASN'T...

WHAT SHOULD I TELL NAGATO?

KURU

KURU

KURU

SO THEN...

OR YEAH, THAT DOESN'T MATTER.

"KYON'S ALWAYS LIKED WEIRD GIRLS"...

HAVEN'T SEEN HER SINCE WE GRADUATED FROM MIDDLE SCHOOL. MAYBE I SHOULD SEND HER A NEW YEAR CARD...

I want you to ask her... to please wait.

SO I CAN BE WORTHY OF NAGATO.

I'M GOING TO STUDY MY ASS OFF.

THAT WON'T WORK.

UNFORTUNATELY, I'M JUST AN ORDINARY KID IN HIGH SCHOOL RIGHT NOW.

And I'm not going to look for a government job...

I'll spend all of my time studying and graduate at the top of my class.

I plan to major in economics.

DOKKAN

DOKKAN

DOKKAN (WHACK)

First, I'll get into a national-level public university.

SIGH... WHAT A PAIN.

THAT'S NICE.

ガチャ
GACHA (CLICK)

I CAME AN HOUR EARLY TODAY TO RELAY THE MESSAGE I'D JOTTED DOWN.

NAGA-TO.

.....

...THIS FEELS SO STUPID.

SOS団

SIGN: SOS BRIGADE

キョド
KYODO (GLANCE)

キョド
KYODO

...

AH...

I KNEW YOU'D BE HERE.

HE WANTS ME TO RELAY A MESSAGE.

...SO HOW ABOUT IT?

BASA (FWAP)

THERE'S THIS GUY WHO HAD THE NERVE TO FALL IN LOVE WITH YOU.

BA (FLAP)

ARE YOU WILLING TO HEAR WHAT HE HAS TO SAY?

HMM ...

...I SEE.

"DEAR MISS YUKI NAGATO...

MY PLAN WAS TO TEAR UP THE SHEET OF PAPER IF NAGATO SAID NO...

"I MUST CONFESS THAT FROM THE MOMENT I FIRST SAW YOU...

"...REVEALING MY FEELINGS IN SUCH A RUDE FASHION.

"I APOLOGIZE FOR MY INABILITY TO REFRAIN FROM... UH...

HAVE I LOST MY MIND?

WHAT AM I DOING?

HMM...I'M STARTING TO FEEL PRETTY UNCOM-FORTABLE.

"...I HAVE DEVISED A PLAN FOR THE NEXT TEN YEARS..."

TWO MORE YEARS TO GRADUATE FROM HIGH SCHOOL.

FOUR YEARS TO GRADUATE FROM COLLEGE.

DON (BAM)

TWO YEARS OF ON-THE-JOB TRAINING.

THREE YEARS TO ESTABLISH MY OWN BUSINESS.

ELEVEN YEARS... NO, WE'LL MAKE IT AN EVEN TEN YEARS.

DON

MY PREPARATIONS FOR PRESENTING MYSELF TO NAGATO-SAN...!

BY THAT POINT, MY PREPARATIONS WILL FINALLY BE COMPLETE.

DOOOON (BOOOOM)

PASA (RUSTLE)

HE WENT ON TO TALK ABOUT ENJOYING A LAID-BACK LIFE WITH TWO KIDS AND SO ON...

A RATHER SKETCHY PLAN.

...WELL, THAT'S PRETTY MUCH IT.

GATAN (CLANG)

...SERI-OUSLY?

KOKUN (NOD)

YOU GET ALL OF THAT?

HOWEVER, I AM UNABLE TO COMPLY.

I HAVE RECEIVED HIS MESSAGE.

RIGHT.

.....

THERE IS NO GUARANTEE THAT I WILL CONTINUOUSLY FUNCTION IN AN AUTONOMOUS MODE FOR TEN YEARS.

PRETTY SURE THAT LENGTH WASN'T THE ONLY PROBLEM ...

...BUT I STILL FELT RELIEVED.

HA HA HA!

OF COURSE.

TEN YEARS IS WAY TOO LONG.

...WALKING HAND-IN-HAND WITH NAKAGAWA OR ANY OTHER GUY.

HONESTLY, I DIDN'T WANT TO SEE NAGATO...

I SHOULD HAVE TURNED HIM DOWN OVER THE PHONE.

TO (SLIDE)

I SHOULDN'T HAVE WRITTEN DOWN HIS LITTLE SPIEL WORD FOR WORD.

SORRY.

I FINALLY REALIZED WHAT THIS NAGGING FEELING IN MY CHEST WAS.

IT WAS SURPRISINGLY EASY TO UNDERSTAND.

PARA (FLIP)

I'LL LET THAT IDIOT KNOW.

WELL, HE'S NOT A BAD PERSON... BUT JUST FORGET THIS EVER HAPPENED.

GUSHA (CRUMPLE)

IT WASN'T LIKE I WAS DATING SOMEONE IN THE GROUP...

...BUT I COULDN'T DEAL WITH THE IDEA OF SOME OTHER GUY GETTING BETWEEN US.

...BUT ESPECIALLY FOR ASAHINA-SAN. I'D DEFINITELY GO AFTER ANY GUY WHO TRIED ANYTHING WITH HER.

KUSHA (CRUMPLE)

GUSHA

THE SAME WENT FOR BOTH ASAHINA-SAN AND NAGATO...

KU (GRAB)

HEH!

I DIDN'T NEED TO WORRY ABOUT HER.

HARUHI? YEAH.

KARARA (RATTLE)

ANY GUY WHO TRIED TO APPROACH HARUHI WOULD AUTOMATICALLY DISQUALIFY HIMSELF.

KOIZUMI WOULD HAVE AN EASIER TIME WITH THE DECREASE IN WORK-LOAD, AND MY LIFE...

...WOULD CHANGE, I GUESS.

AND IF BY SOME FREAKISH CHANCE, SHE DOES HOOK UP WITH SOME GUY?

THAT WOULD BE A VERY GOOD THING FOR THIS PLANET.

GA (CLENCH)

GEHI

I COULD SEE THAT HAPPEN-ING ONE DAY...

...BUT IT DEFINITELY WASN'T GOING TO HAPPEN RIGHT NOW.

HOW COULD THIS HAPPEN?

HEY, STOP THAT! DON'T LOOK AT IT!

YOU'RE VIOLATING MY PRIVACY ...

KASA (RUSTLE)

GUSHA (CRUMPLE)
グシャリ
SHE SERIOUSLY HAD THE WORST POSSIBLE TIMING...
...THAT SETTLED IT.
TODAY WAS MY UNLUCKY DAY.

HAVE YOU LOST YOUR MIND!? ARE YOU AN IDIOT!?

I FEEL LIKE I JUST STUCK MY BARE FOOT INTO A SHOE THAT TURNED OUT TO HOUSE A BUNCH OF COCK-ROACHES!!

GU (TUG)

GU

GU

I'M GONNA KNOCK SOME SENSE INTO YOU, SO JUMP OUT THAT WINDOW!!

WHOOOA! STOOOP IT!

UH, I CAN EXPLAIN.

THERE'S THIS GUY NAMED NAKAGAWA FROM MY MIDDLE SCHOOL...

WHAT? ARE YOU GOING TO SHIFT THE BLAME?

WEREN'T YOU THE ONE WHO WROTE THIS THING!?

BATAN (SLAM)

I CAN'T TALK LIKE THIS...

JUST LET ME GO.

UM...AM I INTER-RUPTING SOME-THING?

SHOULD I...WELL, COME BACK LATER?

ASAHINA-SAN, IT APPEARS THAT WE'RE NOT WANTED HERE.

NAGATO! HELP ME OUT HERE!

NO, YOU'RE NOT INTERRUPTING ANYTHING.

WHERE ARE YOU GOING? HELP ME OUT!

WAIT, WAIT, WAIT!

IT'S NEVER A GOOD IDEA TO STICK YOUR HEAD IN A LOVERS' TIFF.

KAAA (BLUSH)

THIS IS AN ABSOLUTE DISGRACE!

I ACTUALLY RECRUITED AN IDIOT WHO'S CAPABLE OF WRITING THIS MORONIC LETTER...

FINE, I'LL EXPLAIN.

I'LL EXPLAIN EVERY-THING!

SORRY, NAKA-GAWA.

IN A WAY THAT'LL GET THROUGH YOUR THICK SKULL.

...I'LL END UP DIVING THROUGH THIS WINDOW.

IF I DON'T TELL HARUHI EVERYTHING ...

HMPH.

I HAVE TO AGREE.

...BUT HE'S TAKING IT TO EX- STUPID. TREMES.

I DON'T HAVE A PROBLEM WITH THE IDEA OF LOVE AT FIRST SIGHT...

YOU HAVE SOME WEIRD FRIENDS.

BUT...I THINK IT'S WONDERFUL.

...TO TOY WITH YUKI.

I WAS SO SURE THAT YOU AND THAT IDIOT TANIGUCHI HAD TEAMED UP...

TEN YEARS, HUH?

IT'S SO ROMAN-TIC...

I WOULD PROBABLY BE HAPPY TO KNOW THAT SOMEONE CARED ABOUT ME SO MUCH.

HE'S ALL BULKY, AND HE USED TO BE ON THE RUGBY TEAM...

REALLY?

NAKAGAWA IS ANYTHING BUT ROMANTIC.

I WAS PAR-TICULARLY IMPRESSED BY THE LEVEL OF DETAIL.

THIS LOVE LETTER WAS VERY ELOQUENT.

I BEG TO DIFFER.

HIS VOICE IS ALL DEEP.

LET ME SEE IT.

UNLIKE YOU!

I ACTUALLY CARE ABOUT MY FRIENDS.

MY FINGERS WOULD HAVE REFUSED TO WORK.

YOU'VE ALSO SHOWN YOURSELF TO BE A KIND PERSON BY WRITING EVERY WORD DOWN.

THE LETTER.

HUH?

YOU CAN HOLD ON TO IT AS A SOUVE-NIR.

IT'S PRETTY RARE TO SEE THIS NOWA-DAYS.

ARE YOU INTER-ESTED?

OF COURSE... WE'RE TALKING TEN YEARS.

HOWEVER, I AM WILLING TO MEET WITH HIM.

I CANNOT WAIT FOR HIM.

HUH?

...THE SENDER OF THIS LETTER.

I AM WILLING TO MEET ...

I AM INTERESTED.

THE SOBER EYES I KNEW VERY WELL.

I COULDN'T HELP BUT STARE INTO NAGATO'S EYES.

LOVER AT FIRST SIGHT 1 : END

I AM INTER-ESTED.
I AM WILLING TO MEET WITH HIM.
SPOKEN WITH THOSE SOBER EYES I KNEW VERY WELL.
HER STATEMENT LEFT US ALL SPEECHLESS.

...OKAY.

THIS WILL BE OUR LAST VISIT OF THE YEAR.

GOSHI
ゴシ

GOSHI (SCRUB)
ゴシ

THE PLACE NEEDS TO BE SPARKLING CLEAN WHEN WE LEAVE.

SO WE CAN FEEL *GOOD* WHEN WE COME HERE FOR THE FIRST TIME IN THE NEW YEAR!

BAN (SLAM)
ばん

HOW COULD YOU POSSIBLY THROW THAT AWAY!?

THEN I'LL TOSS ALL THIS JUNK...

WHAT!?

PEOPLE LIKE YOU ARE THE REASON THERE ARE HOUSES THAT LOOK LIKE DUMPS.

THEN WE CAN AT LEAST TIDY UP THE BOOK-SHELF.

I'M NOT GOING TO THROW ANYTHING AWAY BEFORE I'VE EVEN HAD A CHANCE TO USE IT.

SAVE THE ENVIRON-MENT!

NI (SMILE)

...I'M NOT GOING TO THROW ANY OF THEM AWAY.

.....

SO MANY BOOKS ...

WE CLEARLY LACKED THE ABILITY TO DISCARD THINGS.

AGU (CHEW)

DID YOU FIGURE OUT A WAY TO DISPOSE OF YOUR GAME COLLECTION?

ガチャ GACHA (CLICK)

EXCUSE ME. DO YOU HAVE A MOMENT?

IN THE END, WE ONLY TRASHED A FLIMSY PAPER BOARD GAME THAT CAME WITH A MAGAZINE.

CAN'T CLEAN THE PLACE IF WE DON'T GET RID OF ANYTHING.

KAA

KAA (CAW)

...THERE ARE MULTIPLE ORGANIZATIONS BESIDES THE "AGENCY" THAT ARE INTERESTED IN APPROACHING NAGATO-SAN.

JUST BETWEEN YOU AND ME...

...AMONG THE T.F.E.I. TERMINALS.

ESPECIALLY BECAUSE SHE'S IN A UNIQUE POSITION...

AT THE MOMENT, SHE IS JUST AS IMPORTANT AS SUZUMIYA-SAN AND YOU ARE.

...THAT DIDN'T INVOLVE THIS PARTICULAR INCARNATION OF HARUHI AND KOIZUMI.

I'D RECENTLY BEEN INVOLVED IN AN INCIDENT ...

IT DIDN'T TAKE MUCH EFFORT TO PLAY DUMB.

THOUGH THAT WAS A RECENT DEVELOP-MENT...

I MIGHT ALSO ADD THAT YOU HAVE THE OPTION...

...OF RELIEVING STRESS BY ENGAGING IN A FRIENDLY TIFF WITH SUZUMIYA-SAN.

I WILL BE BUSY WITH PREPARA-TIONS FOR THE SOS BRIGADE SNOWY MOUNTAIN TRIP FOR THE REMAINDER OF THE YEAR.

I WILL LET YOU HANDLE THIS ONE.

IT'S PRETTY TIRING TO BE SO POLITE TO PEOPLE MY OWN AGE ALL THE TIME.

UNFOR-TUNATELY, I DON'T HAVE THAT OPTION.

I'M NOT GOING TO CRITICIZE THE WAY YOU SPEAK.

THEN STOP.

HEH HEH...

I CAN'T DO THAT.

SINCE I CURRENTLY FIT THE ROLE SUZUMIYA-SAN DESIRES OF ME.

HMPH.

HUH?

I SEEM TO RECALL YOU SAYING THAT SHE WAS JUST ACTING.

AFTER ALL, SHE DOESN'T NEED TO FAKE ANY ASPECT OF HER BEHAVIOR.

IN THAT RESPECT, I'M A BIT ENVIOUS OF ASAHINA-SAN.

IT APPEARS THAT MY EFFORTS WERE NOT IN VAIN.

...BAS-TARD.

11月1/ PAKI (CRACK)

OH? YOU ACTUALLY BELIEVE WHAT I SAID?

IF I WERE TO DISPLAY ANY INDICATION OF CHANGE...

...THAT WOULD BE A VERY BAD SIGN.

YOU ALWAYS LOVE TO PLAY DUMB.

WHY DON'T YOU TRY A NEW PERSONA?

HEY, NO SLACKING!

DON'T WANT TO SEE THAT.

ARE YOU INTERESTED IN SEEING ME GET SERIOUS?

IT IS MY DUTY TO MAINTAIN THE STATUS QUO.

GACHA (CLICK)

KIIN (DING)

KOON (DONG)

TIME TO GO FULL THROTTLE!

THERE'S STILL SOME CLEANING LEFT TO DO.

YEAH, YEAH.

IT'S THE PERSON WHO CALLED YESTER-DAY...

KYON-KUUUN... PHONE CALL...!

How'd it go? What was Nagato-san's response?

HELLO?

It's me.

HYAAH!

FUU (SIGH)

I'M READY FOR ANY ANSWER.

GIVE IT TO ME, KYON...!

KAKOON (CHOCK)

Said she couldn't wait that long.

I'M SAD TO SAY THAT SHE DIDN'T GIVE ME A FAVORABLE ANSWER.

I WASN'T STUMBLING OVER MY WORDS SINCE I ONLY HAD TO REPORT THE FACTS.

SO SHE COULDN'T GUARANTEE ANYTHING.

DIDN'T KNOW WHAT THE FUTURE MIGHT LOOK LIKE IN TEN YEARS.

GIVING UP, THEN?

I WASN'T EXPECTING HER TO ACCEPT IMMEDIATELY.

MAKES SENSE.

...I SEE.

THOUGH... I NEEDED TO DEAL WITH THE PART ABOUT BEING WILLING TO MEET WITH HIM.

ARE YOU REALLY IN ANY POSITION TO SAY THAT?

REALLY?

I'm well aware of the fact that a confession of love from a complete stranger can only be awkward.

YOU HAVE TO FOLLOW A CERTAIN PROCEDURE!

CAN'T DENY THAT IT WORKED

PRETTY SCARY HOW YOU HAD THE WHOLE THING PLANNED OUT.

That's enough for now...

HOWEVER, NAGATO-SAN SHOULD NOW BE...

...SLIGHTLY INTERESTED IN WHO I AM.

MY VOLUNTEER SPIRIT IS RUNNING DRY.

THERE'S MORE?

So Kyon, I need you to do one more thing for me.

Well, now you know.

Really?

FIRST I'VE HEARD ABOUT IT.

DID YOU KNOW THAT I JOINED MY HIGH SCHOOL FOOTBALL TEAM?

Our school has a match against another all-boys' school coming up.

That's pretty much it.

I'LL BE STARTING, OF COURSE!

BAN (BAM)

I WANT YOU TO BRING NAGATO-SAN TO WATCH THE GAME.

DON'T YOU KNOW HOW TO PLAN AHEAD?

COME ON NOW

NOT MUCH WARNING ...

WHEN IS IT?

Tomor-row.

PAAA (SHINE)

GLOWING

AURA

I MUST IMPRESS HER WITH MY HEROICS ON THE FIELD.

THERE IS NO OTHER WAY IF NAGATO-SAN ISN'T WILLING TO WAIT TEN YEARS.

NAKAGAWA'S MENTAL IMAGE

NYA (MEOW)

What's wrong with that? Come watch the game!

THE WAY THINGS STAND NOW, I HAVE NO CHOICE BUT TO GO AND WATCH YOUR HEROICS ON THE FIELD...

AND UNFOR-TUNATELY, TOMORROW IS WIDE OPEN FOR ME.

THAT'S A PRETTY HASTY LINE OF THINKING.

IT'S SUPPOSED TO BE A FRIENDLY EXHIBITION MATCH, BUT WE'LL BE PLAYING FOR REAL.

WE'LL BE PRACTICING EVERY SINGLE DAY, INCLUDING NEW YEAR'S EVE AND NEW YEAR'S DAY...!

IF WE LOSE, THE REST OF WINTER VACATION WILL BE HELL.

IT'S AN ANNUAL TRADITION.

There are only a few days left before we set off on our trip to the Snowy Mountain Lodge...

...

KYON.

SORRY, BUT I DON'T CARE ABOUT YOUR SCHEDULE.

I UNDERSTAND THAT YOU'RE DESPERATE ...

...BUT I HAVE MY OWN ISSUES TO DEAL WITH AS THE YEAR COMES TO AN END.

IF SHE REFUSES, I'LL GIVE UP.

I'M ONLY INTERESTED IN NAGATO-SAN.

SERIOUSLY, I'M BEGGING YOU HERE.

THEN YOU SHOULDN'T SAY THAT YOU DON'T CARE ABOUT MY SCHEDULE.

But if there's a tenth of a percent of a chance...

...I'm willing to take it!

...UNLESS YOU TAKE ACTION!

YOUR DREAMS WILL NEVER COME TRUE...

DON (WHAM)

...FINE.

I'll call Nagato.

AH!

IF SHE SAYS OKAY, I'LL BRING HER TO THE GAME...

Really !?

Thanks, Kyon!

WAH!

SO WHERE'S YOUR HIGH SCHOOL?

I owe you...!

It's like you're Cupid.

I'm going to ask you to [redacted] our wedding.

No, I'll ask you to be the godfather of our first child...

THE NEXT DAY.

PRETTY SURE I'M TOO NICE OF A GUY...

I'D ALREADY KNOWN YESTERDAY...

...THAT NAGATO MOST LIKELY WOULDN'T SAY NO.

WELL, NOW THINGS WERE COMPLICATED.

AND YOU'RE THE ONE WHO CALLED US OUT HERE... WE'VE ALREADY MISSED THREE BUSES!

WHICH MEANT ...

YOU'RE LATE!

...I HAD TO INVITE THE OTHER MEMBERS ALONG.

ARE YOU EVEN TRYING?

YOU HAVE TO PAY FOR LUNCH TO MAKE UP FOR IT!!

ぽわわ！ HOWAWA (FLUFFY)

REALLY?

THAT'S A CUTE COAT

BY THE WAY...

NAGATO SHOULD'VE BEEN THE ONLY ONE I NEEDED TO BRING...

THAT BEING THE CASE, IT WAS BETTER TO JUST BRING EVERY-ONE ELSE ALONG... AT LEAST THAT WAS THE PLAN.

AH!

CAPTURE.

...BUT OUR BRIGADE CHIEF WOULD FIND OUT EVENTUALLY, AND I'D SUFFER SOME KIND OF PUNISHMENT.

I WONDER WHAT THIS GUY LOOKS LIKE.

BUT I DIDN'T EXPECT ALL OF THEM TO ACTUALLY SHOW UP.

THEY WERE EITHER REALLY BORED OR REALLY CURIOUS.

I'VE NEVER WATCHED A FOOTBALL GAME BEFORE.

I'M PRETTY EXCITED.

I CHECKED THE BUS ROUTES BEFORE-HAND.

BURORO (VROOM)

IT WILL TAKE APPROXIMATELY TWENTY MINUTES.

...YOU SEEM TO HAVE MANY PECULIAR FRIENDS.

IN ANY CASE...

GO (RUMBLE)

THIS ONE FELT LIKE HE WAS STRUCK BY LIGHTNING AFTER ONE LOOK AT NAGATO.

GATAN

YEAH, I GUESS.

GATAN (KATHNK)

GATAN

HMM...

WHAT'S THE MATTER?

YOU SEEM RATHER GLOOMY.

DO (THUMP)

WAAAAA (CHEER)

WOW!

...SOMETHING ABOUT THIS DOESN'T FEEL RIGHT.

AAAA

DO (THUD)

DOMU (THUD)

THIS IS A HUGE FIELD!

THE GAME ALREADY STARTED.

...AND THOSE ARE GROUPIES, I GUESS?

BESIDES THE FIVE OF US, THERE'S AN OLD MAN WHO WAS PASSING BY...

ALL BECAUSE A CERTAIN SOMEONE WAS LATE!

AT LEAST, NOT YET...

NAGATO HASN'T SPOKEN OR SHOWN ANY REACTION.

BOARD: FIRST HALF, SECOND HALF, TOTAL

...WELL...

I CAN'T FOLLOW WHAT'S GOING ON...

...BUT THIS LOOKS COMPLI-CATED.

WHICH ONE IS NAKAGAWA-KUN?

I DON'T KNOW THE RULES FOR FOOTBALL...

42

ON THE WHITE TEAM.

THE ONE WITH 82 ON HIS UNIFORM.

82

7

NAKAGAWA PLAYED A POSITION CALLED THE TIGHT END.

KARI

KARI

KARI (SCRATCH)

I GAVE THEM THE EXPLANATION I'D HEARD OVER THE PHONE YESTERDAY.

DOKA (STOMP)

THIS WAS CERTAINLY A VERY AMERICAN SPORT.

DOKA

KORI KORI KORI (SCRAPE)

HE WAS SURPRISINGLY NIMBLE FOR SUCH A BIG GUY.

I SEE. HE DEFINITELY FIT THE ROLE.

THERE ARE OFFENSIVE PLAYERS AND DEFENSIVE PLAYERS.

NAKA-GAWA'S ON THE OFFENSE.

THEY'RE SWITCHING PLAYERS?

DII (TWEET)

HUH?

DEFINITELY NOT.

NO HEAD-BUTTING EITHER

SAME RULES AS MIXED MARTIAL ARTS?

ONLY STANDING JUDO THROWS ALLOWED?

WHERE DO THEY DRAW THE LINE?

FULL CONTACT?

DAKA (STAMP)

DAKA

I'M GUESSING THAT HEAD-BUTTING IS ALLOWED SINCE THEY'RE WEARING HELMETS.

DAKA

CHIRA (GLANCE)

PERFECT FOR WINTER.

LOOKS LIKE A SPORT THAT SENDS THE BLOOD RUSHING TO YOUR HEAD.

I BROUGHT TEA.

THAT'S SO THOUGHTFUL OF YOU.

AS FOR NAGATO...

IN FACT, SHE SEEMED TO BE COMPLETELY SPACED OUT...

SHE DIDN'T SEEM TO BE PAYING MUCH ATTENTION TO NAKAGAWA.

THIS IS REALLY BORING!!

HOW-EVER... ONE OF US WASN'T HAPPY ABOUT THAT FACT.

BOARD: FIRST HALF SECOND HALF TOTAL

...THOUGH IT MIGHT HAVE JUST BEEN THAT THEY WERE EVENLY MATCHED.

THE GAME ITSELF WASN'T PARTICULARLY INTERESTING ...

GABA (GRAB)

...BUT IT'S FREEZING FOR US WHEN WE'RE JUST STANDING AROUND.

WHY ARE WE ONLY ALLOWED TO WATCH?

BWAH!

HAA (SIGH)

はあ？

DO (RUMBLE) DO

THEY'RE PROBABLY ENJOYING THEMSELVES SINCE THEY GET TO MOVE AROUND...

MEAN-WHILE ...

USING HER AS A HEATER?

WOW, YOU SURE ARE WARM, AREN'T YOU?

I'M SO VERY JEALOUS.

I COULDN'T TELL IF SHE WAS EVEN WATCHING NAKAGAWA OR NOT.

NAGATO, THE REASON WE WERE HERE, WAS STILL QUIET.

I GUESS THAT SHOWS HOW FOCUSED HE IS?

AFTER I WENT THROUGH THE TROUBLE OF BRINGING NAGATO HERE.

HE HADN'T LOOKED IN OUR DIRECTION A SINGLE TIME.

THE SAME WENT FOR NAKAGAWA.

...I WOULD BE EATING MY WORDS A FEW MOMENTS LATER.

MAYBE WE'LL BE LUCKY ENOUGH TO SEE SOME FLASHIER PLAY.

...OH, WELL.

...SHORTLY THERE-AFTER, NAKAGAWA WAS FORCED TO LEAVE THE GAME.

DOMU (THUD)

THE KICK RETURNER WAS QUICKLY TACKLED...

DO DO (STOMP)

DO DO DO

THE SECOND HALF BEGAN WITH THE OPPOSING TEAM KICKING OFF.

PI (TWEET)

...AND NAKAGAWA'S TEAM BEGAN THEIR ATTACK...

OOH!

TA (RUSH)

THE QUARTER-BACK TOOK THE SNAP...

...DROPPED BACK TO PASS...

BA (SLAM)

KU (CURVE)

HUH?

!

I COULD SEE NAGATO FROM THE CORNER OF MY EYE.

THE BALL CHANGED DIRECTION...

SHE WHISPERED SOMETHING ...

...AND THE BALL WAS CAUGHT BY...

GAGI (SMASH)

NAKAGA—

GOKI
(CRACK)

EEP ...!

PI
(TWEET)

P111

P1

P1
(TWEE)

...A SOUND THAT I NEVER WANTED TO HEAR.

...NAKA-GAWA'S BODY WAS STILL.

#17 ZAWA

#17 ZAWA
(CROWD)

THE CLOCK WAS STOPPED ...

HEY...

#17 ZAWA

OH...THEY BROUGHT OUT A STRETCHER.

HALA SHRIEK

IS HE OKAY?

YUEEEE...

WHAT DO WE DO?

UU (WOO)

UU

UU

THAT WAS A PRETTY STUPID QUESTION.

I TURNED TO NAGATO WITHOUT THINKING.

SHE STARED AT THE AMBULANCE SIREN AS IF SHE WERE TRYING TO OBSERVE REDSHIFT.

NAGATO WAS EVEN QUIETER THAN USUAL.

LOVER AT FIRST SIGHT II : END

OH...THEY BROUGHT OUT A STRETCHER ...

HYUU (WHOOO)

NAGATO... WHAT DO WE DO?

NAGATO WAS QUIETER THAN USUAL TODAY.

NAKAGAWA'S TEAMMATES WATCHED AS HE WAS CARRIED AWAY.

I WAS EXPECTING A MORE COMICAL END TO THIS FARCE.

I HOPE THAT YOUR FRIEND IS OKAY

YES

WELL, I'M GUESSING HE HAS A MINOR CONCUSSION.

YOU MAKE IT SOUND LIKE YOU'RE AN EXPERT.

YOUR FRIEND CAN'T CATCH A BREAK.

IT'S A COMMON OCCUR-RENCE IN ROUGH SPORTS.

THERE SHOULDN'T BE ANY-THING TO WORRY ABOUT.

DO YOU ACTUALLY WANT NAGATO TO GET WITH NAKAGAWA?

YOU FEEL BAD FOR HIM?

HE WANTED TO MAKE A GOOD IMPRESSION ON YUKI, BUT HE ENDED UP GETTING HURT.

PROB-ABLY TRIED TOO HARD.

...BUT I'M NOT GOING TO INTERFERE WITH SOMEBODY ELSE'S ROMANCE.

NOW LOOK HERE, KYON.

I BELIEVE THAT LOVE IS A DISEASE...

.....

EVEN IF I THINK THAT YOU'RE ABSOLUTELY MISERABLE...

IF YOU BELIEVE THAT YOU'RE HAPPY, YOU'LL BE HAPPY.

HAPPINESS COMES IN DIFFERENT FORMS.

8

IT LOOKED AS THOUGH HE'D MANAGED TO AVOID THE WORST OF IT...

AS NAKAGAWA LAY ON THE STRETCHER WITH HIS HELMET OFF, HE WAS ABLE TO WEAKLY RESPOND TO EVERYBODY'S CALLS.

WAI

WAI

HUH?

AND THERE'S PROBABLY HEATING THERE.

WE CAN TALK MORE THERE.

WAI

LET'S GO TO THE HOSPITAL.

WAI

WAI (CHATTER)

WELL...

WAI

JUST SO YOU KNOW, I WAS WORRIED WHEN THEY TOOK YOU TO THE HOSPITAL.

AREN'T YOU WORRIED?

EH... I'D RATHER AVOID HOSPITALS FOR THE TIME BEING ...

YOUR FRIEND WILL BE THRILLED.

WE'LL PRETEND THAT WE'RE VISITING BECAUSE YUKI'S WORRIED.

SFX: BEE (NYAH)

WHAT?

I DISCOVERED WHERE HE WAS TAKEN.

PACHIN (SNAP)

YES.

WASN'T THAT WORRIED.

YES.

THE ONE WHERE THE DIRECTOR'S AN ACQUAINTANCE OF YOURS, HUH...?

A PLACE WE KNOW VERY WELL.

THE GENERAL HOSPITAL WHERE YOU RECENTLY STAYED.

I'LL JUST LET THAT ONE SLIDE.

I WAS VERY SURPRISED.

WHAT A REMARK-ABLE COINCI-DENCE.

...REGARD-ING THE UPCOMING TRIP TO THE SNOWY MOUNTAIN.

I WAS HOPING THAT WE MIGHT HOLD A MEETING SOON...

SOMEONE FIND A TAXI...

SUZU-MIYA-SAN.

LET'S HEAD TO THE HOSPITAL, THEN.

REALLY?

ASAHINA-SAN AND I NEED TO WORK OUT SOME OF THE DETAILS REGARDING THIS TRIP...

WHY DON'T WE LET THESE TWO HANDLE THE VISIT TO THE HOSPITAL?

...SINCE WE'LL BE SPENDING NEW YEAR'S EVE ON A SNOWY MOUNTAIN.

I HAD ORIGINALLY PLANNED ON HOLDING A MEETING TODAY ABOUT THE SOS BRIGADE WINTER TRIP...

OF COURSE.

KAAN (FLASH)

WELL, THERE ISN'T ANY REASON FOR ME TO GO TO THE HOSPI-TAL...

YEP, YOU'RE RIGHT.

HMMM...

CHIKI CHIKI CHIKI (WHIRR)

AND WE'RE ALMOST TO THE NEW YEAR.

THEN I'LL LEAVE NAGATO-SAN IN YOUR CARE.

SMOOTH-TALKING HIS WAY OUT OF A TIGHT SPOT...

THAT'S THE TRICK HE TYPICALLY USES ON ME.

GU (GRAB)

EESH, GET OFF ME!

YOU CAN DECIDE WHERE TO GO FROM THERE...

DO YOU FIND THAT SATISFAC-TORY?

KURURI (TURN)

PLEASE ARRANGE FOR A MEETING AS SOON AS POSSIBLE.

PI (POINT)

THEN WE WILL HEAD TO THE USUAL CAFÉ.

GOT A SECOND?

BAN (BAM)

LISTEN TO ME, KYON.

GO CHECK ON YOUR FRIEND WITH YUKI.

YOU HAVE TO REPORT EVERYTHING THAT HAPPENS!

BUT!

JUDGING BY THE LOVE LETTER HE WROTE, ONE LOOK AT YUKI SHOULD HAVE HIM BACK ON HIS FEET.

THERE YOU HAVE IT...

GOT IT?

WE SPLIT UP INTO TWO GROUPS.

THINKING BACK, KOIZUMI SAID SOMETHING ODD IN PASSING.

THE TWO OF US WERE TAKING THE SAME BUS THAT GOT US HERE.

I WAS PRETTY SURE THAT I DIDN'T HAVE THAT MANY ABNORMAL FRIENDS.

I WAS WONDERING ABOUT THE "MANY" PART.

YOU SEEM TO HAVE MANY PECULIAR FRIENDS.

GOU (RUMBLE)

WHY DID HE THINK THAT NAKAGAWA WAS PECULIAR?

KOIZUMI WAS THE ONLY OTHER ONE I COULD THINK OF.

NAGATO HAD WHISPERED SOME KIND OF INCANTATION.

!

THERE WAS SOMETHING ELSE BUGGING ME TOO.

GOING FROM EXPERIENCE, THE TWO WERE CLEARLY RELATED.

NAKAGAWA WAS INJURED IMMEDIATELY AFTER THAT.

NAGATO DIDN'T SAY A WORD.

BUT I WOULD KNOW THE ANSWER SOON ENOUGH...

SIGN: ORTHOPEDICS DESK

整形外科
受付

I'M A LITTLE TOO FAMILIAR WITH THIS PLACE NOW...

THEY'RE ALREADY DONE TREATING AND EXAMINING HIM, SO HE'S IN ONE OF THE HOSPITAL ROOMS.

...NAKA-GAWA?

PERFECT TIMING. THEY JUST FINISHED EXAMINING ME.

I'M SUPPOSED TO STAY OVER-NIGHT, JUST TO BE SAFE.

OH, KYON?

BUT I ONLY SUFFERED A MINOR CONCUSSION.

LOOK. OVER HERE.

I FELT REALLY SICK WHEN I FELL, LIKE I BROKE MY NECK OR SOMETHING.

WHO IS THAT WITH YOU?

WH—

I CALLED THE COACH ALREADY.

THEY'RE GOING TO DISCHARGE ME TOMOR-ROW.

YUKI NAGATO... I BROUGHT HER WITH ME.

IT'S NAGATO.

WHAT'S GOING ON?

BAN (BOLT)

NAKAGAWA AS IN CENTRAL RIVER!

I AM HONORED TO MAKE YOUR ACQUAIN-TANCE!!

MY NAME IS NAKA-GAWA!!

CHLIM...

...YUKI NAGATO.

HMM?

PASA (FWAP)

YES.

AH...

NAGATO-SAN...

...RIGHT?

REALLY?

YES.

YOU USUALLY SHOP AT THE SUPER-MARKET BY THE STATION...

YES.

YOU WERE WALKING WITH KYON BACK IN SPRING...

WHY'S HE ACTING SO STRANGE?

...?

...SO...

IS THAT...

.....

SO IF YOU COULD ...

UH... WE NEED TO TALK ALONE.

KYON, COME HERE FOR A SEC.

?

KO

KO (CLACK)

?

THE REAL ONE?

IS THAT... REALLY NAGATO-SAN?

THAT'S NOT VERY NICE.

WHY DID YOU CHASE HER OUT OF THE ROOM?

GU (GRIMACE)

I WAS EXPECTING YOU TO BREAK DOWN INTO TEARS.

UH... UM...

BAN (SLAP)

YOUR FUTURE BRIDE CAME TO SEE YOU.

NOT A TWIN OR A LOOK-ALIKE...

DEFI-NITELY.

THAT'S NAGATO-SAN... RIGHT?

KO

KO

THAT'S NOT IT.

I'M NOT SURE HOW TO EXPLAIN THIS...

DON'T TELL ME THAT YOU'LL ONLY ACCEPT HER WITH GLASSES ON.

KO (CLACK)

WHAT ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT?

AHHH...

KO

SORRY ABOUT THIS.

GIVE ME SOME TIME TO THINK.

.....

NAKA-GAWA?

UM ...

UGH ...

DID SOMETHING HAPPEN WHEN YOU HIT YOUR HEAD?

ARE YOU SERI-OUS?

WHAT THE HELL?

...WHAT THE HELL HAPPENED?

I'LL BE ASKING YOU FOR AN EXPLA-NATION.

...WE'LL LEAVE.

WE BEGAN MAKING OUR WAY TO THE CAFÉ WHERE HARUHI AND EVERYBODY ELSE WAS WAITING...

NAGATO WAS BACK TO TRAILING AFTER ME LIKE A GHOST.

BUT...

...WHAT DO WE TELL HARUHI?

AH, KYON-KUN...

TO (TAP) トン

I KNOW WHO IT IS.

UM, IT'S THE GUY FROM YESTER-DAY...

OH.

PHONE CALL...

PERFECT TIMING.

It's really hard for me to say this...

CHA フ

Oh, Kyon... Sorry.

SHU (SHF)

CHA (CLICK) ナ

NAKA-GAWA?

Could you let her know?

I WANT TO RETRACT MY MARRIAGE PROPOSAL.

I'D LIKE TO HEAR YOUR REASONING.

YOU ARBITRARILY PLAN OUT THE REST OF YOUR LIVES...

What was it all for?

Haven't you been pining after her for the past six months?

...and then you abandon that plan a day later?

YEAH, I'M REALLY SORRY.

I DON'T UNDER-STAND IT EITHER.

AND YOUR ATTITUDE CHANGED THE SECOND YOU MET WITH NAGATO IN PERSON.

YOU BETTER HAVE A GOOD EXPLANA-TION.

But...

...I could no longer see that aura around Nagato-san.

I was thrilled when you guys came racing to the hospital.

I really appreciate it.

NO, SHE WAS OBVIOUSLY A COMPLETELY ORDINARY GIRL... NO DOUBT ABOUT IT.

SHE LOOKED LIKE A COMPLETELY ORDINARY GIRL.

I'VE BEEN RACKING MY BRAIN THIS WHOLE TIME...AND I CAN ONLY THINK OF ONE EXPLANATION.

I DON'T KNOW HOW THIS HAPPENED.

WELL, I'D SAY THE WHOLE THING WAS A MISTAKE

WHERE DID YOU GO WRONG?

It appears that I've made a terrible mistake.

RIGHT

I BELIEVED THAT I'D FALLEN IN LOVE WITH NAGATO-SAN AT FIRST SIGHT...

...BUT I NO LONGER FEEL THAT WAY.

IN THAT CASE, NAKAGAWA ...

OH?

I've been mis-taken the whole time ...

Now that I've calmed down, I've realized that I could never fall in love with someone based on appearance.

I was mistaken about falling in love at first sight.

...I SEE.

AT THIS POINT, I CAN ONLY SAY THAT IT WAS MY IMAGINATION ...

I DON'T KNOW.

...how do you explain the halo of light around Nagato and the impact you felt?

IN FACT, I WASN'T EVEN THAT SURPRISED.

I WAS BEING CURT WITH NAKAGAWA, BUT I DIDN'T ACTUALLY BLAME HIM.

WHEN I'D FIRST HEARD NAKAGAWA'S BABBLING, I ASSUMED THAT THIS WOULD BE THE END RESULT.

THINGS HAD MORE OR LESS TURNED OUT THE WAY I'D EXPECTED.

AFTER THAT, WE CHATTED FOR A BIT.

WELL, IT WAS PRETTY AWKWARD FOR BOTH OF US.

PI (BEEP)

PI

GACHA (CLICK)

I GUESS WE MIGHT RUN INTO EACH OTHER AGAIN ONE DAY.

DO YOU HAVE TIME TO TALK RIGHT NOW?

AFTER THAT...

CHA (CLICK)

YESTERDAY WAS MY UNLUCKY DAY...

CHARI (RATTLE)

I ARRIVED AT THE MECCA FOR WEIRDOS.

BUT IT WAS ALMOST OVER.

CHARI

CHAR

...AND TODAY WAS A HECTIC DAY.

...NEXT TO NAGATO'S APARTMENT.

CHARI

CHARI

THE PARK IN FRONT OF THE STATION...

...

NAGATO.

AS I SAID OVER THE PHONE, NAKAGAWA'S CHANGED HIS MIND.

SORRY ABOUT CALLING YOU OUT HERE ON SUCH SHORT NOTICE.

BUT HIS ABRUPT CHANGE IN ATTITUDE WAS TOO UNNAT-URAL.

THERE ARE BOUND TO BE PEOPLE WHO FEEL THAT WAY.

I CAN UNDER-STAND NAKAGAWA FALLING IN LOVE WITH YOU AT FIRST SIGHT.

...NAGATO.

AS IF SOMETHING HAPPENED DURING THE GAME TO WAKE HIM UP...

HE HAD A SUDDEN CHANGE OF HEART AFTER HE WAS TAKEN TO THE HOSPITAL.

AND THERE WAS ALSO THE GAME TODAY.

CAN YOU SPILL THE BEANS?

YOU WERE THE ONE WHO STAGED THAT ACCIDENT... RIGHT?

...DURING THE GAME.

YOU MUST HAVE PULLED SOME KIND OF TRICK...

HE WAS NEVER LOOKING AT ME.

YES.

HE POSSESSED HEIGHTENED SENSES WHICH ALLOWED HIM ACCESS.

THROUGH ME, THE INTERFACE ...

HE WAS LOOKING AT THE DATA OVERMIND.

HUMANS ARE SIMPLE ORGANIC LIFE FORMS WITH A LEVEL OF RECOGNITION SIGNIFICANTLY BELOW THAT OF THE DATA OVERMIND.

...HE WAS UNABLE TO PERCEIVE WHAT HE HAD SEEN.

...I COULD SEE THIS HALO OF LIGHT BEHIND HER.

THERE IS A HIGH POSSIBILITY ...

...THAT HE WITNESSED TRANSCENDENTAL WISDOM AND AN OVERABUNDANCE OF KNOWLEDGE.

...DESPITE THE FACT THAT THE DATA HE RECEIVED HAD BEEN FILTERED THROUGH A TERMINAL.

HE WAS OVERWHELMED BY THE AMOUNT OF DATA...

HE'D MISTAKEN THAT SENSATION TO BE AFFECTION OR LOVE...BUT IT WASN'T THAT SIMPLE.

NAKAGAWA HAD GOTTEN A GLIMPSE OF SOMETHING INCREDIBLE.

A MIS-TAKE... HUH?

I ANALYZED THE POWER HE POSSESSED ...

...AND DISPOSED OF IT ACCORDINGLY

AM I RIGHT?

DURING THE FOOT-BALL GAME.

ONE MORE THING.

YOU ALTERED HIS EMOTIONS.

AN INDIVIDUAL BRAIN DOES NOT HAVE THE CAPACITY TO CONNECT TO THE DATA OVERMIND.

WHO KNOWS WHAT MIGHT HAVE HAPPENED IF HE CONTINUED ON HIS RAMPAGE?

THAT'S KINDA MISSING THE POINT?

YEAH, THAT MAKES SENSE.

CONTINUED CONTACT WOULD HAVE LED TO DAMAGING EFFECTS.

WAIT.

HEIGHT-ENED SENSES?

BACK TO WHATEVER IT WAS HARUHI DID...

ONCE AGAIN, HUH?

HE MOST LIKELY ACQUIRED THIS POWER THREE YEARS AGO.

...IT WAS CLEAR THAT...

...HARUHI HAD DONE SOMETHING THREE YEARS AGO.

THIS IS JUST A GUESS.

...NAGATO.

A DISRUPTION IN TIME. AN EXPLOSION OF DATA. AND...

...ESPERS ALSO APPEARED.

THAT'S WHAT KOIZUMI MEANT WHEN HE SAID I HAD "PECULIAR" FRIENDS.

HE COULD HAVE EASILY ENDED UP IN A SITUATION SIMILAR TO KOIZUMI'S.

MAYBE NAKAGAWA HAD THE POTENTIAL TO BECOME AN ESPER?

ALSO ...

...IS HARUHI STILL INFLUENCING OTHER PEOPLE IN A SUPER-NATURAL FASHION?

...PER-HAPS.

...

NAGATO.

KO (CLACK) KO

TA (STEP)

MY MIND WAS OCCUPIED BY A RATHER SIMPLE QUESTION.

ONE LAST QUESTION.

WERE YOU DISAP-POINTED?

DID YOU FEEL DISAP-POINTED ...

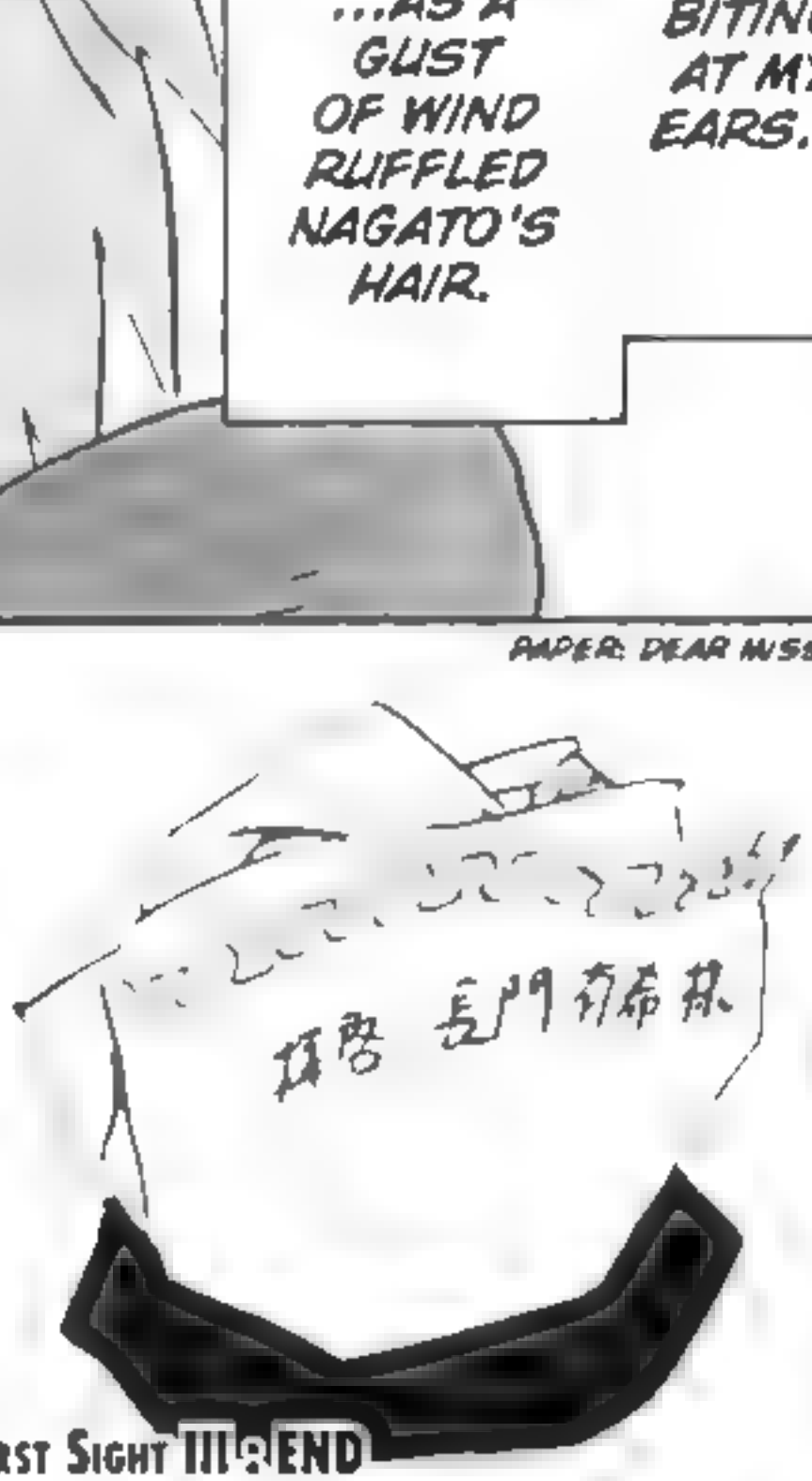
...WHEN YOU FOUND OUT THAT HIS CONFESSION OF LOVE WAS A MISTAKE?

SOMEWHAT.

THE CHILLY NIGHT BREEZE WAS BITING AT MY EARS...

...AS A GUST OF WIND RUFFLED NAGATO'S HAIR.

PAPER: DEAR MISS YUKI NAGATO



LOVER AT FIRST SIGHT III : END

GOOOO (WHOOO)

000

8

WE'RE SCREWED.

CAN'T SEE A THING.

8

MY SENSE OF DISTANCE TELLS ME THAT WE SHOULD HAVE REACHED THE FOOT OF THE MOUNTAIN A WHILE AGO.

THAT'S ODD.

NOW GUESS WHERE HARUHI WANTED TO GO OVER WINTER VACATION?

000

WE WENT TO A REMOTE ISLAND DURING SUMMER VACATION.

YOU WANT TO KNOW WHERE WE ARE?

OOOO

KOIZUMI, DEAL WITH THIS.

EASIER SAID THAN DONE.

OR YOU COULD JUST LOOK AT OUR CURRENT SITUATION...

GOOOOOOO (WHOOOOOO)

BYOOOOO (HOOOWL)

WE SHOULD BE GOING IN THE RIGHT DIRECTION.

I'M LITERALLY FROZEN TO THE BONE.

I KNOW THAT.

COMPLETELY UNTHINKABLE UNDER NORMAL CIRCUMSTANCES

NAGATO-SAN'S NAVIGATION IS IMPECCABLE.

NAGATO-SAN DOESN'T KNOW THE CAUSE EITHER.

THERE WAS NO WAY TO PREDICT THIS HAPPENING.

YET WE'VE BEEN UNABLE TO FIND OUR WAY OFF THIS MOUNTAIN AFTER TRUDGING THROUGH THE SNOW FOR HOURS.

DID HARUHI HAVE ANOTHER ONE OF HER WORTHLESS IDEAS?

SO, WHAT?

I HAVE A HUNCH THAT...

...SUZUMIYA-SAN WOULD NEVER DESIRE THE OCCURRENCE OF SUCH A PHENOMENON.

THAT IS NOT A CERTAINTY AT THE MOMENT.

YOU HAVE A POINT...

AFTER ALL, SHE WAS LOOKING FORWARD TO A MURDER MYSTERY DRAMA PLAYING OUT AT THE MOUNTAIN LODGE.

OOO

GOOO (WHOOO)

I WAS FEELING A MIX OF DOUBT AND UNEASE AS I RECALLED WHAT HAD HAPPENED UP TO THIS POINT...

A HURRICANE LAST SUMMER, NOW A BLIZZARD...

PAPER: COUNTING DOWN TO THE NEW YEAR IN A BLIZZARD

PASA (FLAP)

10

4

PART TWO OF OUR MAGICAL MYSTERY TOUR!

GOING BACK A BIT...

...SHE FIRST MENTIONED HER PLANS ON THE 24TH.

WE'LL BE GOING TO A SNOW LODGE THIS WINTER, JUST AS PLANNED.

EVERY-BODY HAS ONE, RIGHT?

WHEE!!

AND IT WAS A RIOT TO SEE KYON-KUN'S ACT.

THIS DAY HAS BEEN A BLAST!

WHOA, THIS IS GOOD STUFF!

WE WERE HOLDING OUR MYSTERY POT FEST.

AND WE WERE JOINED BY A SPECIAL GUEST THAT DAY.

SO ABOUT THAT SNOW-STORM LODGE...

SOME ENTER-TAINERS SPECIALIZE IN REALLY BAD JOKES.

TSURUYA-SAN.

YOU WERE THE ONLY PERSON TO APPRECIATE THAT ACT.

I USUALLY GO WITH MY FAMILY!

WASSEI (CHEER) わっせい WASSEI わっせい

HERE, CHOW DOWN!

ARMBAND: HONORARY ADVISOR

I HEAR THAT THE LOCATION'S FANTASTIC!!

ば

BAN (BAM) ん。

GUESS WHAT!? TSURUYA-SAN IS LETTING US USE HER VACATION HOME FOR FREE.

I'M SO EXCIT-ED!

I'VE GOT SOMETHING HERE FOR YOU!

BUT THIS YEAR, THE 'RENTS ARE IN EUROPE ON A BUSINESS TRIP.

SO I'LL TAKE YOU GUYS TO THE VACATION HOME WITH ME.

LET'S GO OVER THE SCHEDULE.

ARAKAWA-SAN AND MORI-SAN WILL BE JOINING US.

THEY'LL BE IN CHARGE OF FOOD PREPARATION AGAIN.

YEAH, YEAH.

BUT NO ALCOHOL ALLOWED!

WE'LL SPEND THE DAY SKIING, FOLLOWED BY A PARTY THAT NIGHT!

WE DEPART ON DECEMBER 30TH.

THE SNOWY MOUNTAIN ISN'T THAT FAR AWAY.

THE NEXT PART CONCERNS THE MAIN FOCUS OF THIS TRIP.

I'LL TAKE IT FROM HERE.

AS GUESTS?

THE TAMARU BROTHERS WILL ARRIVE THE NEXT DAY AS GUESTS.

EVERYONE WILL BE AWARE THAT WE ARE MERELY PLAYING A GAME OF DETECTIVE.

WE'LL BE SPENDING NEW YEAR'S EVE ANALYZING THE CASE AND DEDUCING THE TRICK BEHIND IT.

I HAVE PREPARED SOME ENTER-TAINMENT ALONG THE LINES OF LAST SUMMER'S EXPERI-ENCE.

HOWEVER, YOU CAN REST ASSURED THAT THERE WON'T BE ANY SURPRISES.

I WILL THEN REVEAL THE SOLUTION IN A NONCHALANT MANNER...

AT MIDNIGHT, WE'LL ASSEMBLE TO PRESENT OUR INDIVIDUAL THEORIES.

PAFU PAFU (CHEER)

DON (HOOT)

DON

YEAH!

CAN'T WAIT!

THAT'S THE PLAN.

WE WILL BE FILLED WITH A SENSE OF RELIEF AS WE WELCOME THE NEW YEAR.

WE'LL RING IN THE NEW YEAR WITH A BANG.

PERSONALLY, I'D RATHER HAVE SOME PEACE AND QUIET.

YOUR DEFINITION OF A GOOD YEAR WON'T NECESSARILY BE GOOD FOR THE REST OF US.

I CAN SENSE THAT THE UPCOMING YEAR WILL BE A TURNING POINT FOR THE SOS BRIGADE.

I'M SURE THAT THE NEW YEAR WILL APPRECIATE OUR EFFORTS AND MAKE THIS YEAR A GOOD ONE.

YOU DON'T AGREE?

REALLY?

I WAS THINKING THAT THE PAST YEAR WAS A LOT OF FUN AND HOPING THAT NEXT YEAR WOULD BE THE SAME.

THAT'S WHY YOU'RE OBLIGATED TO LIVE EVERY DAY TO THE FULLEST SO YOU HAVE NO REGRETS.

THE SAME GOES FOR TODAY. TODAY WILL NEVER COME BACK ONCE IT'S GONE.

WE ONLY GET TO EXPERIENCE A CERTAIN DAY OF A CERTAIN YEAR ONCE IN OUR LIFETIME.

JUST THINK ABOUT IT.

NEW YEAR'S EVE ONLY HAPPENS ONCE A YEAR.

ISN'T THAT THE WAY TO GO?

I'M DETERMINED TO MAKE EVERY SINGLE DAY OF MY LIFE UNFORGET-TABLE.

M-ME TOO...

HEY, EXCUSE ME...

OOH, ROASTED SWEET POTATOES.

AND SO OUR LITTLE PARTY ENDED...

...AS WE BID FARE-WELL TO TSURUYA-SAN...

...BEFORE SETTING OFF FOR NAGATO'S APART-MENT.

.....

WAH わ

SINCE NAGATO, WHO LIVED ALONE, POSSESSED THE IDEAL PLACE FOR GOING WILD...

あはは AHAHAHA!

AFTER ALL, I THOUGHT ...

...AS EXPECTED, THIS PARTY WAS PRETTY CRAZY.

FOR ONCE, WE SHOULD PREVENT THE SITUATION FROM DETE-RIORATING TO A POINT WHERE ANY STRAIN WOULD BE PLACED ON NAGATO.

NO, WE WERE OBLIGATED TO DO SO.

A NEW YEAR, HUH?

WHO KNEW WHAT MIGHT HAPPEN?

I SHOULDN'T NEED TO EXPLAIN THE REASON FOR THAT.

I FELT PAR-TICULARLY TOLERANT THIS TIME OF YEAR.

LEAVE THE HARD WORK TO KOIZUMI AND HIS PEOPLE.

THAT MADE PERFECT SENSE, RIGHT?

AND THAT WAS ESSENTIALLY HOW OUR CHRISTMAS EVE WENT.

OFF WE GO!

AND TODAY WAS THE DAY.

...SO WE'RE GOING SKIING AS IN THE SKIING WHERE YOU GLIDE ON SNOW? ♪

I'M SO EXCITED!

YAHOO!

THE WEATHER IS IDEAL FOR SKIING.

YAAAY!

CAN'T DO ANYTHING ABOUT HER TAGGING ALONG.

WHO CARES?

WE WILL NEED A CAT FOR THE GIMMICK USED IN THIS PARTICULAR MYSTERY.

I APPRE-CIATE YOUR COOPER-ATION.

(NYAA (MEOW)

OUR FAMILY'S CALICO CAT WAS A MEMBER OF THIS TRIP.

I WAS HOPING FOR AN ENCORE PERFOR-MANCE.

...BUT SHAMISEN DID AN ADMIRABLE JOB OF ACTING WHEN WE WERE FILMING THE MOVIE.

A RANDOM CAT WOULD HAVE SUFFICED ...

AND MY SISTER ENDED UP TAGGING ALONG.

GOOOOOOOO (WHOOOOSH)

THE PRESENT SHAMISEN IS JUST A NORMAL CAT WHO CAN'T TALK.

MEW.

I'LL GIVE YOU SOMETHING TO MUNCH ON ONCE WE'RE THERE.

HANG IN THERE A LITTLE LONGER.

MEW.

WE CAN MANAGE TO ACCOM-MODATE ANOTHER PERSON.

ESPECIALLY IF IT'S JUST A CHILD.

SO WELL BEHAVED THAT YOU HAD TO WONDER IF HE WAS ACTUALLY A FORMER STRAY.

HE WAS VERY WELL BEHAVED.

I'M REFERRING TO HOW HE'S AN UNDER-STANDING CAT.

AND I DON'T MEAN THAT A MALE CALICO IS PAR-TICULARLY LUCKY.

I WAS CONSID-ERABLY DISTURBED WHEN HE FIRST STARTED TALKING...

...BUT THIS CAT WAS CLEARLY THE CORRECT CHOICE.

AND SHE MANAGED TO PICK UP AN EXTREMELY RARE SPECIMEN IN THE PROCESS.

HARUHI WAS THE ONE WHO RANDOMLY SELECTED HIM FROM A SWARM OF STRAYS.

GATAN (KATHNK)

...JUST HAVE HER BUY ONE OF THOSE ICE CREAM BARS WITH A CHANCE FOR A FREEBIE.

THAT WOULD ALMOST CERTAINLY COMPLICATE MATTERS.

WE CAN'T MOOCH OFF THE LITERARY CLUB BUDGET FOREVER.

I SHOULD TELL HER TO GO BUY A LOTTERY TICKET.

KYAA (SHRIEK)

GATAN

KOTON (KACHUNK)

THAT WAS WHEN I REMEMBERED THAT THE TRAIN RIDE WOULDN'T BE VERY LONG.

WE WOULD PROBABLY BE BUSY UPON OUR ARRIVAL.

IT WOULD BE PRUDENT TO PRESERVE MY STRENGTH.

明日が原
あしたがはら
PUWAAAA (HOOONK)
2車両目
東車

SIGN: ASHITAGAHARA

THESE ARE TWO ACQUAINTANCES OF MINE.

I BELIEVE THIS WOULD BE THE FIRST MEETING FOR TSURUYA-SAN.

HELLO, AND THANK YOU FOR YOUR EFFORTS.

YOU MUST BE TIRED AFTER YOUR LONG TRIP.

HEYA! I SHOULDN'T HAVE ANYTHING TO WORRY ABOUT IF YOU COME RECOMMENDED BY KOIZUMI-KUN.

IT'S A PLEASURE TO MEET YOU!

...AND ARAKAWA-SAN.

THEY WILL BE LOOKING AFTER US FOR THE DURATION OF THIS TRIP. MORI-SAN...

SCRUB AWAY ALL OF THE GRIME FROM THE PAST YEAR SO WE CAN BE FRESH FOR THE NEW ONE!

NOW, EVERYBODY, WE'RE GONNA GO ALL-OUT ABOUT HAVING FUN HERE!

YOU SOUND SO BOSSY.

I'M EXPECTING THIS WINTER TRIP TO BE A BLAST.

LONG TIME NO SEE!

HEH HEH ...

Y-YES.

YAY!

BAN (BAM)

GOT IT!?

WHAT AN ADORABLE LITTLE GUEST.

A CLEAR BLUE SKY AND PRISTINE WHITE SNOW.

NOBODY WOULD HAVE EXPECTED A STORM IN THEIR WILDEST DREAMS.

NOT THEN.

IX 6
JARI
THIS PARTICULAR VACATION HOME IS ACTUALLY OUR SMALLEST, THOUGH!
JARI
=CCRUNCH)
TSURUYA'S VACATION HOME WAS LOCATED NEAR THE TRAIN STATION WITH A SKI RESORT WITHIN WALKING DISTANCE.
WE PILED INTO A COUPLE OF OFF-ROAD TRUCKS FOR THE TREK.
JEEP
JARI
11 X 6
JARI
BUT I REALLY LOVE THE PLACE!

GOTTA LOVE THE SIGHT OF A GIRL DRIVING A BIG CAR.
THERE IT IS!
WHAT ARE YOU MUM-BLING ABOUT?
WELL, ASAHINA-SAN IS THE ONLY MAID I NEED.
...I WAS ABLE TO DEDUCE THAT MORI-SAN WAS AT LEAST OLD ENOUGH TO HAVE A DRIVER'S LICENSE.
A WONDERFUL RECEPTION. ...BUT MORE IMPOR-TANTLY...

JARI

YOUR SMALLEST ...?

IT'S A LOT MORE COMFORTABLE THIS WAY!

I GUESS... HMM?

WOW!

THIS VACATION HOME IS JUST AS BIG AS THE VILLA WE VISITED LAST SUMMER.

I CAN SEE THAT THIS WILL BE A SPLENDID TRIP.

?

ARE YOU INSANE?

WELCOME, EVERYONE.

NOTHING SEEMED TO BE OUT OF THE ORDINARY.

?

YES, IT REMINDED ME OF SUMMER VACATION.

A VERY UNSETTLING SENSATION.

STILL, WHAT WAS THIS FEELING?

KYON-KUN!

MIND SHARING A ROOM WITH YOUR SISTER?

TRUTH BE TOLD, THERE WERE BARELY ENOUGH ROOMS.

THAT ODD, GNAWING FOREBODING I'D EXPERIENCED.

BUT I WOULDN'T CONSIDER THIS TO BE DÉJÀ VU...

YOU COULD SAY THAT THIS EVENT WAS COMPLETELY RIGGED.

I DON'T MIND SHARING A ROOM WITH HER.

THE ATTIC ROOM IS OPEN, THOUGH.

YEAH ...

I JUST CHECKED OUR ROOMS, AND THE BEDS ARE HUGE.

IT WOULD BE SAFER WITH TWO GIRLS SHARING A ROOM INSTEAD, RIGHT?

AN ACT, NOT REAL.

EVERYBODY KNEW WHAT WOULD HAPPEN.

MMM ...

WELL?

WE CAN LET HER DECIDE.

ABNORMAL POWERS WOULDN'T COME INTO PLAY... AT LEAST, THAT WAS THE PLAN.

HARUHI WOULDN'T GO THROUGH ANY EMOTIONAL TURMOIL.

THAT'S THAT.

WHAT ABOUT SHAMISEN?

BUN (SHAKE)

BUN

BUN

I WANNA SLEEP IN MIKURU-CHAN'S ROOM.

...NO.

UNLIKE YOU, MY NERVES AREN'T STRONG ENOUGH TO BEAR THE STRAIN OF SPENDING TIME WITH A TALKING CAT.

I WILL HAVE TO RE-FUSE.

I CAN'T TAKE THE STRAIN EITHER..

I'LL JUST LET HIM WANDER AROUND...

NYAN (MEOW)

...WELL.

BASED ON MY EXPERIENCE, THERE WAS NO POINT IN THINKING ABOUT IT.

DEFINITELY.

...FIGURED IT WAS MY IMAGI-NATION.

NOW, LET'S GO SKIING!

CHA (CLACK) FP

CHA FP

CHA FP

CHA FP

CHA FP

IT NEVER SNOWS WHERE WE LIVE.

CAN'T HAVE WINTER WITHOUT SNOW!

HAVEN'T SKIED SINCE I WAS IN GRADE SCHOOL.

A PRIVATE SKI RESORT, HUH?

I HADN'T SKIED IN FOREVER. PRETTY SURE THIS WAS MY SISTER'S FIRST TIME AND IT WAS APPARENTLY ASAHINA-SAN'S FIRST TOO.

I'D PREFER TO HEAD ON OVER TO THE EXPERT COURSE, BUT WHAT ABOUT EVERYONE ELSE?

WHAT ARE YOU GOING TO DO, KYON?

AFTER ALL, IT WAS A PRIVATE SKI RESORT UNTIL TEN YEARS AGO.

THIS PLACE ISN'T THAT CROWDED.

TSUI (SHOO)

SHAA (SWISH)

BUN

WE NEED TO TEACH THEM THE BASICS...

...OR ELSE THEY'LL HAVE TROUBLE GETTING BACK ON A SKI LIFT, LET ALONE ATTACKING THE EXPERT COURSE.

BEN (SMACK)

GIVE US SOME TIME TO PRACTICE.

KYON-KUN AND EVERYBODY ELSE CAN JUST SKI AROUND.

SOUNDS GOOD.

HARU-NYAN, YOU TAKE CHARGE OF THE LITTLE SISTER!

IN THAT CASE, I'LL COACH MIKURU THROUGH THE MOTIONS.

AH HA HA HA!

...

IS THIS FUN?

SHAA

BYUN (DASH)

IT'LL TAKE A WHILE BEFORE I GET THE HANG OF SKIING AGAIN.

THIRTY MINUTES LATER

BOON (BOOM)

LINE UP YOUR LEGS AND PUSH OFF HARRRD!!

WAH!

WAH!

ZURI (SHH)

ZURI

SUITEEN (CRASH)

AND THEN WHOOSH!

YOU GO ZOOM!

ZURI

EITHER SHE HAD NATURAL TALENT OR A BRILLIANT INSTRUC-TOR.
THIS MUCH OF A DIFFERENCE AFTER THIRTY MINUTES...

WOW, IT'S AMAZING ...!

ZURI

ZURI

ZURI

THAT'S MORE LIKE IT!

THIS IS FUN ...!

THANKS. SORRY ABOUT THIS.

ARE YOU SURE?

I'LL LOOK AFTER THIS GIRL.

HARU-NYAN, YOU GUYS CAN GO AHEAD AND RIDE THE LIFT TO THE TOP.

WELL, LITTLE SISTER.

DO YOU WANT A SKIING LESSON, A SNOWMAN SESSION, OR A SLED RIDE?

SHE'S REALLY SOME-THING, HUH...

WELL, I ALREADY KNEW THAT.

NO.

AH, I MIGHT WANT TO JOIN THEM...

OKAY, SNOW-MAN IT IS.

BON (BAM)

SNOWMAN!!

GOOO (RUMBLE)

WE'RE GOING TO THE TOP.

IT'LL BE A BLAST!

WE DON'T WANT TO WASTE THE GOOD WEATHER.

(WHOO)

I AGREE ...

...BUT WE SHOULDN'T JUMP STRAIGHT TO THE HARDEST COURSE.

A PERFECT WAY TO END THE YEAR!!

THE END OF THE YEAR, HUH...?

WELL, I KNEW WHAT SHE MEANT.

AND I WAS IN FOR THE LONG HAUL.

BESIDES, WE HAVEN'T RUN INTO ANY SLIDERS YET.

IF YOU PLAN ON MAKING AN APPEAR-ANCE, BRING IT.

JUST...

...GO A LITTLE EASY ON ME.

I EXPECTED TO RUN INTO A COUPLE MORE BIZARRE SITUA-TIONS BEFORE EVERY-THING WAS SAID AND DONE.

IT TOOK A CONSID-ERABLE AMOUNT OF TIME FOR ME TO REACH THIS POINT.

YEAH, IT'D BEEN FUN.

I COULD CONFIDENTLY SAY THIS NOW.

GOOOOOOO
(ROOOOAR)

I DON'T KNOW!

SOME-BODY DO SOME-THING!!

FUAA (SOB)

WHERE ARE WE RIGHT NOW?

BOOOOOOOO
(FWOOOOOO)

ビョオオオオ

I'M FREEE-EEEEE-ZING!

I HOPE THAT YOU NOW UNDERSTAND WHY WE'RE TRUDGING AROUND THIS SNOWY MOUNTAIN.

ULULU
(HOWL)

THAT CONCLUDES MY FLASH-BACK.

WE COULD ONLY DEPEND ON NAGATO.

WE COULD WALK STRAIGHT OFF A CLIFF WITHOUT EVER KNOWING...

THIS IS BAD. WE CAN'T SEE A THING.

YET WE STILL HADN'T REACHED OUR DESTINATION, AS I MENTIONED IN THE BEGINNING.

I WAS RELUCTANT TO RELY ON HER, BUT OUR LIVES WERE ON THE LINE HERE.

HARUHI HAD BEEN IN THE LEAD WHEN SHE CAME TO A STOP, AND NAGATO ALSO CAME TO A SUDDEN HALT.

BY THE TIME THE REST OF US CAUGHT UP...

HYOUUUUU (WHOOOOO)

IT CAME WITHOUT WARNING... NONE OF US KNEW WHEN IT STARTED.

uuu

AS IF IT HAD BEEN SUMMONED BY SOMEONE.

...THE BLIZZARD WAS ALREADY HERE.

WAIT.

ZA (CRUNCH)

LET'S BUILD AN IGLOO AND TAKE SHELTER UNTIL THE BLIZZARD DIES DOWN.

uu

I GUESS WE DON'T HAVE A CHOICE.

OUR CURRENT POSITION WOULD INDICATE THAT WE HAVE ALREADY PASSED OUR STARTING POINT.

AN INDETER-MINABLE PHENOME-NON.

WE SHOULD HAVE SPOTTED SOME SIGN OF CIVI-LIZATION BY NOW.

HARUHI THINKS THAT YOU MIGHT HAVE GONE THE WRONG WAY.

WHAT'S GOING ON?

WE'VE BEEN FOLLOWING YOU AROUND FOR HOURS.

OR PER-HAPS...

ASSUMING THAT THE SPATIAL COORDINATES I HAVE IDENTIFIED ARE CORRECT.

WE HAVEN'T SPOTTED ANY LIFT CABLES OR EVEN A LODGE.

WHAT THE HELL?

HUU (WHOO)

...THE SITUATION HAS TRANSCENDED MY CAPACITY FOR SPATIAL PERCEPTION.

UUU

BEYOND YOUR ABILITIES?

WHO'S RESPON-SIBLE THIS TIME?

HOWEVER, THE LIGHTING WAS ABOUT AS DIM AS BEING IN A CAVE WITH LUMINOUS MOSS...

THE CLOUDY SKY WAS STILL ILLUMINATED BY A FAINT GLIMMER OF LIGHT.

SNOWY MOUNTAIN SYNDROME I : END

Snowy Mountain Syndrome II

WE LEFT THE TSURUYA FAMILY VACATION HOME AROUND 3 P.M.?

THE THICK CLOUDS AND HOWLING BLIZZARD PREVENTED US FROM DETERMINING HOW HIGH THE SUN WAS IN THE SKY.

WE DIDN'T EVEN KNOW WHAT TIME IT WAS.

WHO'S RESPONSIBLE THIS TIME?

BYUUUUUUUUUU (WHOOOOOOO)

THE SITUATION HAS TRANSCENDED MY CAPACITY FOR SPATIAL PERCEPTION.

des
wor
since 1998

12.30
ON A SNOWY
MOUNTAIN TRIP

AH!?

JUUUU (WHOOO)

UUUU

KYON, LOOK OVER THERE.

WHAT'S UP?

I COULD UNDERSTAND WHY KOIZUMI WAS SO SUSPICIOUS. BUT WE REALLY DIDN'T HAVE A CHOICE AT THIS POINT.

UU

JUU

HOWEVER, IT WASN'T THERE A MOMENT AGO.

THIS WAY! EVERYONE FOLLOW MY LEAD!

I'VE BEEN PAYING CLOSE ATTENTION TO OUR SURROUNDINGS.

UU

THE LIGHT IS CLEARLY ARTIFICIAL.

AH!

AH...

GOOOOOOO (ROOOOAR)

THIS THING'S... MORE CASTLE THAN MANSION.

AND A HUGE ONE TO BOOT...

IT'S A MANSION.

I THOUGHT THERE'D BE SOMEBODY AROUND SINCE THE LIGHTS ARE ON.

WHAT DO WE DO?

MAYBE THEY'RE OUT...

IS ANY-BODY HOME ...?

EXCUSE ME...!

JJJJ

...BUT THAT WOULD HAVE BEEN TOO CONVENIENT FOR MY TASTES.

JJJJ

I WOULD'VE APPRECIATED A WARM WELCOME WITH SOME PIPING HOT SOUP...

WE PROBABLY SHOULDN'T GO INSIDE ...

GO

GO

GO

GO (RUMBLE)

CHIRA (GLANCE)

THIS BETTER NOT BE A HAUNTED HOUSE.

YEAH.

I GUESS NOBODY'S HERE.

WE'RE COMING IN...!

TO (TAP)

ANY-BODY HOME ...?

I WAS EXPECTING SOMEONE TO WALK IN ANY MOMENT NOW...

THE HEAT WAS ON.

THE CHANDELIER PROVIDED FLICKERING LIGHT.

IF I LET YOU GO BY YOURSELF, I WON'T BE ABLE TO STOP WORRYING ABOUT YOU BEING RUDE.

WAIT. I'M COMING WITH YOU.

I'LL GO SEE IF ANY-BODY'S HERE.

I'M GOING TO TAKE A LOOK AROUND.

NOT MUCH WE CAN DO ABOUT THAT.

DON'T ORDER US AROUND.

...IT'S POSSIBLE THEY COULDN'T HEAR YOU IN THE BACK.

THE PLACE IS SO BIG THAT ...

CHA COLACKO

THE SKI BOOTS WERE SO HEAVY...!

KOIZUMI, I'M TRUSTING YOU TO TAKE CARE OF ASAHINA-SAN AND NAGATO.

チラ

SFX: CHIRA (GLANCE)

ROGER THAT.

KOIZUMI-KUN, YOU NEED TO LOOK AFTER THE OTHER TWO.

WE'LL BE RIGHT BACK.

WE COULD SEARCH EVERY NOOK AND CRANNY OF THIS MANSION WITHOUT FINDING A SINGLE PERSON.

I JUST HAD A HUNCH SOME-HOW.

I'M PRETTY SURE THAT HE WAS THINKING THE SAME THING I WAS.

CHA

DON

TA (TAP)

THAT WAY.

THE STAIRCASE BY THE ENTRANCE LED TO A LONG HALLWAY STRETCHING IN BOTH DIRECTIONS.

WE COULD SEE ROOM AFTER ROOM AFTER ROOM...

TO (TAP)

NOW THIS WAY.

HARUHI CHOSE TO SEARCH THE UPPER FLOOR FIRST.

TO

TO

TO

TO

TO

TO

THIS REMINDS ME OF LAST SUMMER.

WHEN WE WENT OUTSIDE TO CHECK ON THE BOAT.

THE HALLWAY WAS BRIGHTLY LIT.

HELPFUL, BUT CREEPY AT THE SAME TIME.

HELLO ...!?

TA

MORE THAN I'D CARE TO COUNT...

...WHAT ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT?

NOTHING HAPPENED.

DID SOMETHING HAPPEN BETWEEN YOU AND YUKI?

...ANY-WAY.

ZUN CLOOMO

SPIT IT OUT.

YOU BETTER NOT HAVE ANY FUNNY IDEAS!?

WELL ...

LIAR.

YOU'VE BEEN PAYING EXTRA ATTENTION TO YUKI SINCE CHRISTMAS.

UHH...

YOU MUST HAVE DONE SOMETHING TO YUKI, RIGHT!?

SHE DOESN'T LOOK DIFFERENT, BUT I CAN TELL.

YUKI'S BEEN ACTING WEIRD TOO.

WHAT? THAT'S DISGUST-ING.

UH... THE TRUTH IS...

YEAH, BUT...

...NEITHER OF US HAVE DONE ANYTHING TO BE ASHAMED OF.

I COULD ONLY STAMMER.

COULDN'T DENY THAT I'D BEEN TRYING TO BE MORE CONSIDERATE OF NAGATO...

AH...

YOU SEE.

HER PROBLEM HASN'T BEEN SOLVED YET.

I GUESS THAT...IT'S SOMETHING SHE NEEDS TO DEAL WITH HERSELF.

SO...SHE ASKED ME FOR SOME ADVICE.

NAGATO HAS THIS PROBLEM SHE'S DEALING WITH.

WHY WOULD SHE ASK YOU FOR HELP!?

JUST CALM DOWN.

KII (SHRIEK)

THAT'S WHY YOU'VE BEEN WATCHING HER?

WHAT KIND OF PROBLEM IS THIS?

WHAT DO YOU MEAN?

DEPENDING ON HOW EVERYTHING TURNS OUT...

THERE'S BEEN SOME CHANGE IN HER FAMILY SITUATION.

I DON'T KNOW ANY DETAILS, THOUGH.

FAMILY ISSUES, RIGHT?

DO YOU KNOW WHY NAGATO'S LIVING ALONE?

FAR AWAY... TO LIVE WITH RELATIVES PERHAPS.

SIMPLY PUT, SHE'LL BE MOVING.

I JUST HAPPENED TO BE THERE WHEN SHE NEEDED TO TALK TO SOMEBODY.

IT'S JUST THAT SHE'S BEEN BROODING OVER THIS BY HERSELF FOR SO LONG.

NAGATO IS DETERMINED TO SETTLE THIS HERSELF.

THAT'S WHY.

YUKI IS AN IMPORTANT BRIGADE MEMBER!

I DIDN'T REALIZE YUKI WAS HAVING PROBLEMS ...

SHE SHOULD HAVE COME TO ME.

I SEE ...

SHE DIDN'T WANT TO MAKE ANY TROUBLE.

IF SHE'D GONE TO YOU, YOU'D PROBABLY STAGE A PROTEST.

BUT, WELL, YEAH.

I GUESS THAT SOUNDS LIKE THE YUKI I KNOW.

BISH. (SNAP)

REALLY?

THOSE COMPUTER SOCIETY GUYS WERE SALUTING HER...

WELL, I GUESS ...

LOOKED LIKE SHE WAS HAVING FUN TO ME, THOUGH...

OF COURSE.

JUST TO BE CLEAR, EVERYTHING I JUST SAID IS OFF THE RECORD.

YOU DEFINITELY CAN'T TELL NAGATO.

BUT.

IF IT COMES TO THAT, I'LL BACK YOU EVERY STEP OF THE WAY.

IF, ON THE OFF CHANCE ...

...THAT NAGATO DECIDES TO TRANSFER SCHOOLS, YOU'RE FREE TO GO ON A RAMPAGE.

KYON-KUN!?

BAN (SLAM)

OF COURSE...

WHY ARE YOU CRYING?

APPARENTLY, SHE HAD BOUGHT MY STORY.

SUZU-MIYA-SAN...

I'M SO GLAD THAT YOU'RE BACK...

I WOULD LIKE TO KEEP THIS A SECRET FROM SUZUMIYA-SAN.

DO YOU... HAVE A MOMENT?

I SHOULD PROBABLY SHARE THE BLAME!

...BUT I'D SOMEHOW MANAGED TO MATCH HARUHI'S IMPRESSION OF NAGATO.

I FOUND IT ODD THAT SHE COULD ATTRIBUTE ANY PART OF THIS MADE-UP SCENARIO TO TYPICAL NAGATO BEHAVIOR...

HASN'T EVEN BEEN HALF AN HOUR.

?

HOW MUCH TIME WOULD YOU SAY HAS PASSED ...

...SINCE YOU AND SUZUMIYA-SAN LEFT US?

A ROUGH ESTIMATE WILL DO.

...SINCE YOU AND SUZUMIYA-SAN SET OFF ON YOUR SEARCH.

... THREE HOURS HAVE PASSED ...

FOR THOSE OF US LEFT BEHIND...

I WAS EXPECTING YOU TO SAY THAT.

NAGATO-SAN WAS THE ONE WHO KEPT TRACK OF TIME.

(WHOOOO)

SHE FOLLOWED MY INSTRUCTIONS PERFECTLY.

I ASKED HER TO MOVE OUT OF SIGHT AND RETURN AFTER TEN MINUTES.

WE RAN A LITTLE EXPERI-MENT...

DO YOU KNOW WHAT THIS MEANS?

HOWEVER, SHE RETURNED BEFORE I COULD COUNT TO TWO HUNDRED.

DON CDHMD

...OR YOUR SENSE OF TIME BECOMES DISTORTED HERE.

THE FLOW OF TIME VARIES WITHIN THIS MANSION, DEPENDING ON YOUR LOCATION...

OR ELSE OUR SENSE OF TIME WILL BECOME INCREAS-INGLY DISTORTED.

THAT IS NOT ALL.

IT WOULD BE BEST TO MOVE TOGETHER AS A GROUP.

WHAT IF THE DISTORTION BEGAN BEFORE WE ARRIVED HERE?

IF WE WERE TO ASSUME THAT WE HAD ALREADY SLIPPED INTO A DIFFERENT DIMENSION AT THAT POINT...

...OUR INABILITY TO REACH THE BOTTOM OF THE SLOPE...

THE SUDDEN BLIZZARD ...

EVERY ROOM FROM THE SECOND FLOOR UP WAS A BEDROOM.

IN OTHER WORDS, WE HAVE NO MEANS OF COMMUNICATING WITH THE OUTSIDE WORLD...

NO PHONES, TVs OR RADIOS.

NO PHONE JACKS OR WIRELESS DEVICES EITHER.

THAT'S NOT VERY FUNNY.

IT'S LIKE THE *MARY CELESTE*.

THE LIGHTS AND HEATING WERE ALL LEFT ON.

NOT IN ANY ROOM FROM THE SECOND FLOOR UP.

I WONDER WHAT HAPPENED TO THE PEOPLE HERE.

HOPEFULLY, THEY WILL FORGIVE US FOR COMING IN WITHOUT PERMISSION.

I'M SURE THEY WILL.

...AND THE BAD WEATHER IS INHIBITING THEIR RETURN...

THAT'S SOMETHING TO CONSIDER.

THE INHABITANTS OF THIS MANSION WENT ON A TRIP BEFORE THE BLIZZARD HIT...

THERE IS ANOTHER POSSIBLE EXPLANATION.

BOXES: EGGPLANTS, ORANGES

DOCHA (STUFFED)

IT'S ALMOST LIKE THEY JUST RESTOCKED?

THE KITCHEN HAD PLENTY OF FOOD AND TABLEWARE...

WE DIDN'T HAVE A CHOICE.

STILL, WE SHOULD BE GRATEFUL.

...THERE WAS EVEN A KARAOKE ROOM AND A RECREATION ROOM...

A LAUNDRY ROOM WITH A DRYER...A BIG BATH LIKE THE ONES IN PUBLIC BATH-HOUSES ...

THAT WASN'T ALL.

IT WAS ALMOST AS IF THE ROOMS WE WERE WISHING FOR "POPPED" OUT OF NOWHERE...

...NO.

IT WAS ALMOST AS IF THEY HAD KNOWN WE WERE COMING.

RIGHT, I'M FEELING HUNGRY, SO LET'S MAKE SOME-THING.

GIVE ME A HAND, MIKURU-CHAN.

IN THAT CASE, WE HAVE A RIGHT TO USE THESE FACILITIES.

MAYBE THIS WAS BUILT BY THE GOVERN-MENT?

NAGATO, WHERE ARE WE?

I SERIOUSLY DOUBT THAT THEY'D BUILD A MANSION OUT HERE.

PEOPLE ARE ALREADY COMPLAINING ABOUT WASTEFUL GOVERNMENT SPENDING.

POTSURI (WHISPER) (ぽつり)

THIS SPACE IS PUTTING A STRAIN ON ME.

CAUSE CANNOT BE DETER-MINED ...

MY LINK TO THE DATA OVERMIND HAS BEEN CUT OFF.

THIS IS AN EMERGENCY

... WHAT DO YOU MEAN?

CAN'T YOU CONTACT YOUR PATRON?

I DO NOT KNOW.

THE SNOWY MOUNTAIN AREA WAS PART OF THIS ALTERNATE SPACE THAT SOMEBODY CREATED?

WHICH MEANS THAT WE AREN'T IN THE REAL WORLD...?

UUUUH (WHOOO)

...SINCE SIX HOURS AND THIRTEEN MINUTES AGO, WHEN WE WERE CAUGHT IN THE BLIZZARD.

KOI-ZUMI.

DIDN'T EXPECT TO RUN INTO A NON-HARUHI-RELATED PHENOMENON THAT NAGATO COULDN'T COMPREHEND ...

I WAS STARTING TO GET NERVOUS.

HOWEVER, I HAVE NOTHING ELSE TO OFFER...

SUZUMIYA-SAN HAS DONE NOTHING THIS TIME.

ALL I KNOW IS THAT WE AREN'T IN CLOSED SPACE THIS TIME.

WE'LL TAKE FIVE ADJACENT ROOMS.

I'M GUESSING THAT... WE CAN'T ALL STAY IN ONE ROOM.

WE ATE WHILE DECIDING ON ROOM ARRANGE-MENTS.

PAPER: LET EVERYONE KNOW IF SOMEBODY COMES!! BOYS, GIRLS, ENTRANCE

SO WE'D BE PREPARED TO JUMP OUT IF ANYBODY RETURNED TO THE MANSION.

...WE ENDED UP CHOOSING FIVE ROOMS NEAR THE STAIRS.

CHA CLACK

WE CAN MAKE MORE, IF YOU WANT.

CHA

EAT UP.

KACHA (CLINK)

ABSO-LUTELY SCRUMP-TIOUS. AS GOOD AS WHAT YOU WOULD FND IN A RESTAU-RANT.

...I HADN'T FORGOTTEN.

BUT THAT WASN'T THE CASE RIGHT NOW.

IT WAS AS THOUGH SHE HAD LOST HER APPETITE.

SHE WAS TYPICALLY A BIG EATER.

IT WAS NAGATO.

I DECIDED TO TAKE A DIFFERENT PATH FROM MOST PEOPLE LONG AGO.

I MEAN, IT WOULDN'T BE ANY FUN TO GO WITH THE FLOW AND DO WHAT EVERYBODY ELSE DOES.

OKAY, TIME TO TAKE A BATH.

...WHAT ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT?

I SIMPLY NEEDED TO GO AGAINST THE NORM FROM THE VERY BEGINNING.

THAT WAS WHEN I REALIZED.

I ABSOLUTELY HATE STEREO-TYPES!

YOU AREN'T ALLOWED TO DO WHAT THE TYPICAL ADOLESCENT BOY WOULD DO IN THIS SITUATION.

WE'RE ABOUT TO TAKE A BATH.

UFU FU FU! ♡

YOU CAN'T TELL? IT SHOULD BE OBVIOUS.

...SO WHAT AM I UH... SUPPOSED TO DO?

KAKOON (WHACK)

DON'T PEEK!

I WON'T.

GOOOO (WHOOO)

OOOOO

THERE WAS COMPLETE SILENCE IN THE HALLWAYS OF THE MANSION, IN CONTRAST TO THE HOWLING BLIZZARD OUTSIDE.

THIS WILL BE A LONG STORY.

I HAVE SOMETHING TO TELL YOU.

WHAT IS IT?

KON (KNOCK) KON

THE AIR WAS WARM.

HOWEVER, I FELT ANYTHING BUT COM-FORTABLE.

RYOKO ASA-KURA.

MY SECOND TRIP THROUGH TIME TO THE TANABATA THREE YEARS AGO.

SOS BRIGADE MEMBERS WITH DIFFERENT BACK-GROUNDS

ASAHINA-SAN (BIG). AND...

THE ENTIRE COURSE OF EVENTS FROM THE DISAP-PEARANCE OF HARUHI TO THE MOMENT I WOKE UP IN A HOSPITAL BED.

I SHOULD NOT NEED TO EXPLAIN WHAT I'M ABOUT TO SAY.

...I SEE.

HOW I WAS SUPPOSED TO RESTORE THE WORLD IN THE NEAR FUTURE...

WHAT'S THAT?

FASCI-NATING.

IN FACT, I HAVE MY OWN SUSPICIONS.

...IN SUZUMIYA-SAN'S POWER...

THERE IS A POSSIBILITY OF DECAY...

...IT HAS BEEN WEAKENING.

NAGATO-SAN'S ALIEN AURA, THAT ATMO-SPHERE ABOUT HER...

AND ACCORD-INGLY... HOW SHOULD I PUT THIS...?

I MENTIONED THAT SUZUMIYA-SAN HAS BEEN CREATING CLOSED SPACE AT A LESS FREQUENT PACE.

...AS WELL AS NAGATO-SAN'S ABILITY TO MANIPULATE DATA.

ZA

ZA

ZA

ZA (SPLASH)

ZA

ZA

ZA

ZA

ZA

ZA

SUZUMIYA-SAN'S BEHAVIOR IS GRADUALLY APPROACHING THAT OF AN ORDINARY YOUNG GIRL.

ON TOP OF THAT, NAGATO-SAN IS DISTANCING HERSELF FROM HER POSITION AS A TERMINAL...

AT LEAST, THIS IS HOW IT APPEARS TO ME.

BUT THERE'S A PROB-LEM.

AND I DON'T MEAN OUR CURRENT PREDICA-MENT.

AT THIS RATE, MY JOB WILL MORE OR LESS BE DONE.

THESE CHANGES ARE MORE THAN I COULD EVER HAVE HOPED FOR.

FUWAA (PHEW)

KO (GULP)

KO

I HAVE YET TO TRAVEL BACK TO THE PAST TO SAVE THE WORLD.

ONE BEYOND OUR COMPREHENSION, BEYOND NAGATO-SAN'S COMPREHENSION.

SA (SWISH)

YOU COULD SAY THAT WE HAVE BEEN TRAPPED INSIDE AN ALTERNATE SPACE...

HUU (WHOO)

I FIGURED THAT THERE WASN'T ANY HURRY...

WOULDN'T MAKE SENSE OTHERWISE.

NO, YOUR RETURN IS INEVITABLE AT THIS POINT.

SHA (SLIDE)

IT WOULD BE SAFE TO ASSUME THAT YOU, NAGATO-SAN, AND ASAHINA-SAN WILL NEED TO RETURN TO OUR ORIGINAL SPACE AT THE VERY LEAST.

THIS HYPOTHESIS ASSUMES THAT IT WON'T MATTER IF NONE OF US EVER RETURN TO OUR ORIGINAL SPACE.

!?

I HAVE A DIFFERENT THEORY TO OFFER.

A RATHER PESSIMISTIC THEORY, IF YOU WILL.

...OUR MINDS WERE SCANNED AND COPIED INTO A DIGITAL SPACE...

WHAT IF...

...AND THEN OUR MINDS AND NOTHING ELSE...

...WERE TRANSPORTED TO A VIRTUAL SPACE...?

ONLY OUR MINDS ...?

UUUUU (WHOOO)

WE WOULD BE MERE COPIES, NOT THE ORIGINALS.

WE WERE COPIED INTO THIS ALTERNATE SPACE.

THE ORIGINALS ARE, WELL...

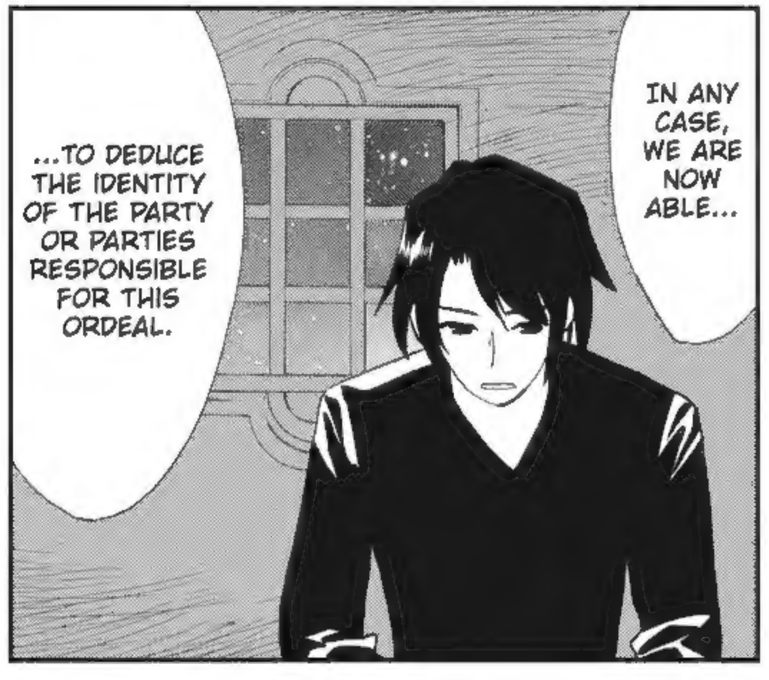
...PARTY-ING AT TSURUYA'S VACATION HOME AS WE SPEAK?

SNOWY MOUNTAIN SYNDROME II : END

TO BE CONTINUED

AND WHAT IS THE MEANING OF THIS METAL PANEL THAT LOCKS THE ENTRANCE OF THE MANSION...?

HOWEVER, THEY TURN IN FOR THE NIGHT WITHOUT REACHING A SOLUTION...



THAT WAS WHEN IT HAPPENED!

KYON AND KOIZUMI CONTINUE TO INVESTIGATE THE CIRCUMSTANCES BEHIND THEIR ORDEAL IN THIS MYSTERIOUS MANSION.

THE NEXT VOLUME INCLUDES THE CHAOTIC CONCLUSION OF "SNOWY MOUNTAIN SYNDROME" & "WHERE DID THE CAT GO?"

The Melancholy of Haruhi Suzumiya
10

Original Story: Nagaru Tanigawa
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